

**RECONCEPTUALISATION OF THE TRAGIC FLAW: A STUDY OF THE TRAGIC
PROTAGONISTS IN WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S OTHELLO AND JEAN RHYS' WIDE
SARGASSO SEA**

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ABSTRACT

Tragedy is an eternally powerful dramatic representation in literature that, across generations, has stood the test of time and gripped audiences with its strong and realistic protagonists whose tragic flaw may be their downfall. However, the question must be asked: how realistic is this tragic flaw put forth? Does the male tragic protagonist's tragic flaw lie solely within him and not the circumstances around him? And what about the existence of female tragic protagonists? To answer these questions, this paper first undertakes a study of the concept of the tragic flaw that is not to be confused with the term 'hamartia'. The study of the concept is then applied to two texts featuring a male and a female tragic protagonist respectively. This helps to better understand the two tragic characters beyond the narrow Aristotelian ideas concerning their tragic flaws. Enhanced by the various studies carried out on either works' protagonists by critics and popular theories, this paper aims at offering a more balanced observation of tragic characters in literature. The present study is done with the feminist aim of achieving equality of the sexes within the sphere of literary works of tragedy. Thus, the present research focuses majorly on the concept of tragic flaw with reference to the study of the male tragic protagonist in William Shakespeare's Othello and the female tragic protagonist in Jean Rhys' Wide Sargasso Sea.

KEYWORDS: Female; Male; Tragic Flaw; Tragic Protagonist